



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
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FINANCE

June 11, 2013

Delegate Kathy Byron  
Joint Committee on Technology and Science  
Broadband and Education Committee

Dear Delegate Byron,

I would first like to thank you and the Broadband and Education Committee of the Joint Committee of Technology and Science for the opportunity to further review my bill, HB 1777. It is through the great work of this Committee and other advisory committees that we have the opportunity to fully study and understand complex pieces of legislation that do not have ample time during our short legislative session.

The goal of my bill, HB 1777, is to control skyrocketing costs for college students purchasing textbooks for their courses. Student textbook prices are rising at exponential rates, with some students looking at book costs up to \$800 dollars a semester. This measure provides students the opportunity to obtain free, digital textbooks for the most enrolled-in prerequisite courses.

Many students in the Commonwealth would not have the opportunity to pursue higher education if not for student loans or scholarships to alleviate the ever increasing costs of continuing education. HB 1777 will provide another opportunity to further reduce costs for these individuals that do not have the financial ability to spend hundreds of dollars on textbooks every semester.

With the ever expanding digital age, it only makes sense to begin to utilize the technological capabilities of our Commonwealth and our great universities. We can merge technology with student's knowledge of new age media in the form of online digital books. Smart phones, tablets, iPads and laptops will now be used to host free digital textbooks.

Through conversations with the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia (SCHEV) I have learned of their desire to begin e-textbook procurement. SCHEV has also alerted me of the Internet2 program that will soon expand access to e-textbooks to some of the larger higher education institutions in the Commonwealth. Internet2 will also be negotiating with Courseload for a contract to incorporate testing, validation and accessibility – all of which are required by my bill HB 1777. This contract could also allow for open-source material – a key component of my proposed legislation that will ensure that students can access free material as well as protecting the work of the author.

It is my hope that through JCOTS we can begin to bring together the necessary parties to further advance the idea behind HB 1777 and provide access to affordable digital textbooks to the Commonwealth's great universities and students.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eileen Filler-Corn".

Eileen Filler-Corn  
Member, House of Delegates